

Memo

2/27/59

TO: Mr. Kelly

Enclosed is a letter for Congressman
Fogarty, a statement for his use in
introducing the bill, and a summary
of the cost of the study. If any
questions occur to you, please do not
hesitate to call me at my home on
Saturday. My number is Columbia 5-6343,
ext: 204. *728-5306*

Sincerely,

Irvin P. Schloss
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FROM: AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR THE BLIND

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Mr. George Kelly
Room 1133
New House Office Building
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kelly:

I am enclosing six copies of a statement for Congressman Fogarty's possible use on behalf of H.R. 5243 before the Subcommittee on Special Education on Monday, March 9. The statement is the same as the one used by the Congressman in introducing the bill except for the revision of the first sentence, the change of "my colleagues" to "you", addition of a sentence about the housing of the Commission at the end of the next to last paragraph, and the addition of a final sentence.

In the event Congressman Fogarty will have an opportunity to testify in person before the Subcommittee and is asked about the other study commission bills (H.R. 356, introduced by Rep. Carl Elliott, and H.R. 1855, introduced by Rep. D. R. Matthews), I should like to outline what we consider the shortcomings of these bills.

H.R. 356--The 21-member Commission is unnecessarily large. The scope of the study is too broad, taking in all voluntary agencies in work for the blind and the medical research aspects of prevention of blindness. Thus, the \$200,000 authorized for the entire study is woefully inadequate. As there are in excess of 350 voluntary agencies for the blind in the United States, and as it would take a good-sized staff to evaluate the programs of the more than 20 guide dog agencies alone, we estimate that so broad a study would cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000 if it were to be done properly.

H.R. 1855--The objectivity of the nine-member Committee provided for in this bill would be subject to question. The majority of the Committee would consist of the representatives of special interest groups in work for the blind. (I could actually name the individuals who would inevitably be chosen.) The study provided for in this bill is also too broad in scope for the amount of money (\$250,000) which would be authorized to carry it out. Any study which includes voluntary agencies in its scope would have to get into the question of fund-raising practices and ethics as well as program justification. Fund raising is a major study in itself. The Subcommittee on Legal and Monetary Affairs of the House Committee on Government Operations began a study of fund raising by national voluntary health and welfare organizations toward the end of the last session of Congress and is expected to resume its investigation this year.

Our reason for advocating a definitive study limited to Federally-supported programs except for medical research (H.R. 5243) is that it represents a realizable objective in terms of the cost of the study and the basic programs which affect the life of every blind person in the country.

Also to be considered by the Subcommittee next week is H.R. 14, introduced by Rep. Walter F. Baring of Nevada, and its 55 companion bills. These bills were introduced at the request of the National Federation of the Blind. I did not include any comments on this legislation in the draft of Congressman Fogarty's statement. In our testimony, we will point out that we consider H.R. 14 unnecessary legislation, in view of Constitutional guarantees of the rights of individuals; that the bill represents a symptom of the problems in services to blind persons; that the bill if it became law would compound these problems, not cure them; and that we propose instead a study of the type provided by H.R. 5243 as a means of authoritatively and factually establishing what inadequacies exist and of recommending ways to correct the inadequacies.

Once again, may I express our appreciation to Congressman Fogarty and to you for your interest.

Sincerely yours,



Irvin P. Schloss
Legislative Analyst
Washington Office

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Enclosure